

Christianity and Society

LIONEL TRILLING'S CRITIQUE
OF THE LIBERAL MIND

by

NATHAN A. SCOTT, JR.

THE LAYMEN'S MOVEMENT AND
THE ACADEMIES

by

ALEXANDER MILLER

THE FUTABA COOPERATIVE FARM

by

SAM FRANKLIN

EDITORIALS

BOOK REVIEWS

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EDITORIALS

Inflation and Group Selfishness

The problem is to avoid inflation. The fact is that it is not being avoided. The reason why it is not avoided throws an interesting light upon the problems of justice in a nation. In a period of vast military expenditures money earned is greater than the goods produced for the consumer's market. Thus everybody's dollar competes with everyone else's dollar in a scant market until each dollar is worth less than before. The simplest way of avoiding inflation is to place so heavy a tax upon everyone that the dollars available for consumption are equal to the value of goods in the market. But no one dares apply so rigorous a solution and even the wisest citizens shrink in moments of self-interest from pressing what reason dictates.

The next best method of stopping inflation is a combination of price control and rationing; for without rationing, price control can become very unjust. We have price control without rationing because this policy is less subject to the charge of "socialism". We were tardy in instituting price control because even a Fair Deal administration was reluctant to cease from burning incense before our idol of "free enterprise". This tardiness means that prices are frozen at a very high level. Furthermore they will continue to rise, partly because the pressure on the market is too great and partly because of the guar-

anteed high price of food products. The "parity" principle in food prices was meant to protect farmers against unfairness in the total distribution of the national wealth. But there is no disposition among farmers to recognize that in the present situation the food consumers of the cities may need more protection than they.

Furthermore there is the problem of wages. If wages are frozen at the same time prices are frozen, the rise in costs which immediately preceded the price freeze must be borne by the workers throughout the period of stabilization. This injustice is recognized and the price stabilizers are willing to grant, say 10% increases. But labor can prove that this is not sufficient to cover rising costs. Furthermore stabilization requires renunciation of the "escalator" clauses in labor contracts which guarantee labor rising wages according to the price index. Labor rightly argues that it would be willing to give up the boon of the escalator clause if prices were really stabilized. But it rightly surmises that they won't be fully stabilized. Labor argues furthermore that since the "escalator" contracts promise increases only three months after the price index has risen, these increases are the consequence, and not the cause, of inflation. But they can not deny that they may well be the cause of future inflation.

The fact is that every particular group in society is more intent upon its own posi-

tion in this radical readjustment of social forces than it is in the total result. Some of the reasons used in the debate wonderfully reveal the limits of reason in political debate. Thus a Senator who owns a vast industrial establishment lectures labor leaders on the injustice of their wages compared with the sacrifices which the soldiers make in Korea. But he fails to see that the contrast between his profits and the sacrifices of the soldiers is even greater. Actually the operations of a free economy become anachronistic as soon as a nation is involved in a total effort like war or quasi-war. For in that moment all private advantages, compared with the great sacrifices of our actual defenders, become monstrous, even as the self-regulating tendencies of a free economy become inoperative. Yet it would not do simply to turn the nation into a vast bureaucracy. For experience has taught us that there are limits to planning as well as to freedom.

We will probably reach a tolerable solution of this problem, as we did in the last war, not because each segment of the population has learned wisdom but because the pressures and counter-pressures produce a semblance of stability. The wisdom and the virtue of the citizen is not great enough to affirm justice irrespective of interest. Democracies can remain healthy if there is enough wisdom and justice to affirm the compromises which result when no interest can fully prevail. Some interests are of course worsted in this struggle. The unorganized groups for instance have suffered consistently in the recent inflations of war and post-war years.

If preachers want to explain to congregations why it is sentimental to expect men to achieve pure justice, not to speak of pure love; if they want to make clear what is meant by Christian "realism" as against Christian "idealism", let them make an analysis of how we are all involved in the inflationary spiral and how we all tend to twist the spiral upwards by trying to escape from the consequences of the previous twist. If pacifists, on the other hand, who think it easy to apply "pure love" to

international relations, would study the anatomy of the inflationary spiral they might be instructed in the force of collective self-interest in human affairs.

Hybris

Great nations are too strong to be destroyed by their foes. But they can easily be overcome by their own pride. One has the uneasy feeling that our own country is greatly tempted in this critical age to that pride, in which the prophets of old recognized the portent of Babylon's doom. "Thou sittest as a Queen that saith I will never know sorrow. Therefore in one moment will your sorrow come".

It seemed for a time as if we were doing tolerably well in assuming a position of unparalleled power and responsibility in the world community of nations. We had been drawn out of our isolation and had seemingly been cured of isolationist illusions. The free world, embattled against the most virulent political religion of any age, required the help and leadership of this powerful young giant which had grown up on a virgin continent. We gave that help and seemed to be maturing under the unaccustomed burdens which history had thrust upon us. We had the good sense to save western Europe from communist inundation by the "Marshall plan". In it prudent self-interest was united with concern for others in a fashion which represents the most attainable virtue of nations.

But the situation has changed. At present, having forced our friends to adopt a resolution in the United Nations declaring communist China the aggressor, we find ourselves suddenly isolated, conscious of the fact that their reluctant acquiescence has dissipated their trust in us. Power alone is never sufficient, even among nations, to establish lasting bonds. The anti-American feeling in Britain and in Europe is expressed as follows by *The Economist*, the most pro-American paper in Britain: "Emotionally it originated from the feeling that General MacArthur

abused and betrayed the trust that the United Nations put in him. But it has been raised in pitch in recent weeks by dislike both of the substance of American policy and of the form in which it has been couched. In substance the United States seems deliberately to be seeking, what everyone else is most anxious to avoid, an extension of hostilities in the Far East.—In form American policy seems now to have taken the shape of issuing peremptory instructions to the United Nations, by congressional resolution, and then flying into a temper when they are not immediately obeyed”.

The distrust in both Europe and Asia in our capacity to lead the free world does not arise from our reverses in Korea. Rather it arises from the impatience, the partisan bitterness and the hysteria which this defeat has unloosed among us. More specifically it is derived from the fear in both Europe and Asia that we are willing and ready to plunge the world into war. The Manchester Guardian thinks that the difference between America and Europe lies in the fact that we are calculating on how we may win a global war which Europe still hopes to avoid.

Since it is certainly not true that the American people are “exuberant for war” as a European critic suggests, the question is how we came to give the world this impression. Primarily the impression was created by our policy toward Asia. It is in that policy in which one may see the temptations of pride. For we do not understand Asia. In our moral pride we think we are a beacon light of freedom to Asia. In our military pride we think we could win the battle against communism in Asia by military might. The fact is that Asia is a continent in the convulsions of half a dozen simultaneous revolutions. It is a colored continent, justly resenting the white man's arrogance. It is a continent of quasi-colonial peoples or of nations recently emancipated from colonial rule. The Asian peoples certainly do not adequately understand the perils of communism. But on the other hand they have no reason to

believe that democracy, as we understand it, would help them out of the morass of their poverty. Our “Voice of America” tells them of our living standards, which are evidently regarded as proofs of our virtue but which the Asians, partly in envy and partly in honesty, regard as proofs of our obsession with the gadgets of life.

The first difference between European and American attitudes toward Asia appeared in the problem of the recognition of communist China. Many Europeans felt that the new government in China should be recognized if for no other reason than to serve notice on Asia that we would not support the discredited Chiang Kai Shek regime, which is to the whole of Asia a symbol of the corruption of the old order. Incidentally Europe sometimes seems to argue that Mao's regime must be good because Chiang was so bad; while we argue with equal lack of logic that Chiang must have been tolerable because Mao's regime is intolerable. The subsequent attack in Korea healed for a while the breach between Europe and America and Asia. But MacArthur's gay military adventure on the Manchurian border and our recent unwillingness to agree to a cease-fire arrangement have convinced Europe that we are willing, indeed eager, to be involved in an endless war in Asia. Europe rightly believes that the tide of communism can not be stemmed in Asia by military ventures; and it also, probably rightly, fears that such military ventures will open the door to a communist invasion of Europe.

How did we arrive at this intolerable relation with our allies? How did we get into the mood of truculence which persuades our journals to suggest that our European allies are cowards and our Asian allies dupes and that we may have to stand alone against communism with nothing but our own righteousness—and atomic bombs—to support us?

One difficulty is that American conservatism has only the slightest understanding of the moral and political imponderables which must enter into wise political calcu-

lations. Everything is measured in terms of economic and military potential. If the moral factor is considered it comes into consideration in a bogus fashion, as for instance when a journal insists: "We must stand firm in our moral principles even if the world abandons us". Thus the Hoover type of conservatism fails to reckon with the deep moral and spiritual affinities which we have with Europe; and the Knowland and MacArthur type of conservatism fails to understand our lack of those spiritual affinities with Asia which would give us a basis for military operations there. In one moment we are asked to abandon both Europe and Asia; and in the next to venture into vast and problematic operations in Asia which might end in disaster in both Europe and Asia. There is no shrewd calculation of all the contingencies because we are, on the one hand, too proud of our military power and imagine that we can master historical destiny with it, if only it is fully developed and displayed. On the other hand we are too proud of our virtue, and do not recognize that the virtue of our "way of life" is full of historical contingencies, understandable in terms of the history of a fortunate nation upon a fortunate continent, but not relevant to European experience, and even less relevant to Asia. There is meanwhile a common devotion to freedom and a fear of aggression in the whole non-communist world which has been confused and obscured by our inclination to measure the world purely by our yardstick.

Since, however, our foreign policy is not conducted by Hoover or Senator Knowland it must still be explained why Europe and Asia are filled with such apprehensions. The answer is partly that our press conducts the foreign policy of Hoover and Knowland. The other part of the answer is that the administration has become captive more and more to the opposition. Neither Truman nor Acheson seems to have the political or moral authority to break out of this captivity. Thus we stand in a kind of apoplectic rigidity when freedom of maneuver is essential. We have declared

China the aggressor but that will do us no good if we do not apply sanctions. And what sanctions can we apply without being bogged down in the whole Asian morass?

Perhaps the whole of Asia will turn communist with the exception of the island perimeter (Japan and the Philippines) which must be held for strategic reasons; and fortunately also must and can be held with a moral basis for our strategy. Perhaps we must accept the fact that we are not all-powerful and that we lack both the moral and strategic resources to guide Asia through its turmoils. Perhaps it would be better to let go where our power does not suffice in order to hold where we have both responsibility and power. There are ways in which we can help Asia, though liberals are almost as wrong in trusting in a Point Four program to do this as the conservatives are wrong in trusting Chiang Kai Shek. Let us hope that before these lines reach the reader we shall have helped India to stave off its famine. But basically we can help Asia most by not presuming upon a moral authority which we do not possess there. On this issue our missionaries, who have done more to establish spiritual affinities with Asia than any other group, are almost unanimous.

Since our leaders are floundering, it is important that the people's soberness and common sense assert itself. Let it be asserted particularly by Christian people, not out of their own wisdom, but by the wisdom of faith which knows the importance of "casting down imaginations and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God". Our national problem is ultimately a religious one. A powerful nation has obscured the distinction between its majesty and the Majesty of the Lord of history.

The Mastery of History

Undoubtedly the communist fury and fanaticism stems, not so much from its "materialism" and its "atheism" as from the belief and the pretension that a "proletarian" movement on the other side of a

revolution represents, not an historical force, but a kind of trans-historical fulcrum upon history. The communist is cruel because he imagines himself God. According to his faith, other classes and nations are motivated by "opportunism" and they see the truth darkly, their minds confused by an "ideological taint." Capitalist nations are by definition "imperialistic," but communist nations are, by definition, non-imperialistic. They solve every problem of foreign policy, according to Molotov, by basing their policy "upon the firm foundations of Marxist-Leninist science."

It is probably vain to speculate upon how much communist oligarchs really believe the religion which invests their judgments with omniscience and their movements with omnipotence. There is little reason to suppose that they do not believe it; since belief naturally accords with the vanities of the human mind. The communist probably believes this religion just as much as the Sultan of Turkey once believed that he was also the Caliph of the Moslem faith and the true interpreter of the will of Allah.

Not all of the fury comes from this pretension, however. A part of it comes from the frustration of a world situation which refuses to follow the course which has been chartered by the communist faith. The communist has taken what Engels called the leap from "the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom." He is no longer enmeshed in the vast destinies of history. In theory, at least, he is history's master. Of course he did not expect all the citadels of the devil (capitalism) to fall immediately. But he did expect them to be gradually destroyed by their own "inner contradictions." Recently a new purge has taken place among Soviet economists because a second group of scientists were not as certain, as the Kremlin thought they should be, that the American economy was bound to end in disaster. In short the fury of frustration is added to the fury of pretension in the mood of God-kings who have usurped the ultimate majesty over history. They must treat with contempt those who

do not know what they know; and they are bound to react with cruelty to every counter-force in history which challenges the divinely ordained historical dialectic. Communist fanaticism is, in short, a religious phenomenon. We know its historical analogies.

We have already observed how some of the hysteria in our nation has the same root. We are not as bad in the western world as the communists, partly because our creed of mastering history was a little different. We did not claim to stand upon the ultimate ground from which history is mastered. We merely claimed that it was within our reach. A little more technical power, a little more enlightenment, a little more psychological technique and sociological knowledge would soon put us in the position of mastering the vast forces of historical destiny. We have been disappointed also. But our fury is diluted with wistful hopes and is therefore not quite so noxious.

Thus both communist fanaticism and western-liberal hysteria and frustration reveal the fruits of the destruction of a Christian faith which discerns meanings and induces fateful decisions in history; but which recognizes that the whole historical panorama stands under a mysterious divine sovereignty "whose thoughts are not our thoughts and whose ways are not our ways."

The Embarrassment of Victors

A reporter writes from Japan: "It is not at all certain that the Japanese are anxious to assume military responsibilities in the Asian situation; but it is obvious that they take a certain satisfaction in being wooed for possible military tasks by the victors who forced them to write pacifist clauses into their constitution."

The embarrassment which one hopes the American military overlords of Japan feel about this reversal is of course even greater in Germany. Karl Barth declares that American occupation authorities sought

even to prevent toy soldiers from being sold in German stores. But now the changing world situation requires that we enlist the Germans on our side only a few short years after we tried to cure them of "militarism." We may even find ourselves under the necessity of using in the army some young Germans to whom we denied the right to receive a university education, because of their record in the German army.

It is probably a mistake to arm Japan now; and it was certainly an error to press for the remilitarization of Germany before the rest of Europe was armed. But, sooner or later these nations will have to furnish their due share of a united defense against communist imperialism. One hopes that

our embarrassment in asking these vanquished nations to practice "vices" of which we tried to cure them only yesterday will teach us to approach the problems of international relations with a little more modesty. Germany and Japan were undoubtedly unduly militaristic. But there is something ludicrous about an occupying power, forcing by military power the disavowal of military power upon a nation. How very brief our virtues and vices are in the helter-skelter of history! We might all learn, nations and individuals, to be more modest in claiming virtue and assigning blame in such a way that the perspective of a moment is made to seem some immutable law of life.

LIONEL TRILLING'S CRITIQUE OF THE LIBERAL MIND

By NATHAN A. SCOTT, JR.

The recent publication of a collection of Mr. Lionel Trilling's essays¹ discloses, as one might have suspected with their periodic appearance in literary journals over the past ten years, that his is one of the most interesting and highly organized minds now active on the contemporary American scene. And since the effect of their appearance together in book form upon those already familiar with his other writings will undoubtedly be that of disclosing, also, the unity which his entire work has had, it is perhaps appropriate to attempt some definition of the consistencies which seem now to characterize his thought.

Though Mr. Trilling is a professor of English literature at Columbia University, his activity, as a man having professional dealings with literature, has not at all amounted to the dreary archaeological documentation of literary history which one finds embalmed, say, in the pages of *P.M.L.A.* and by which the conventional professor of English in the American university is apt to distinguish himself. In the new preface to his recently reissued study of Matthew Arnold,² he says that, after finishing the book eleven years ago, he turned, quite intentionally, away from the subject, having no wish to be 'an Arnold man.' And ever since he has steered a

firm and brilliantly virtuous course between the Scylla of dilettantism and the Charybdis of that deadening stodginess into which the practice of specialism betrays so many of our academic literary scholars. His intelligence, as it has taken form in the intervening years, has shown itself in its processes to be complex and vivacious and, as his recent volume amply indicates, capable of ranging throughout the whole breadth of contemporary culture. Indeed, the deepest impulse of his entire work, as a novelist and a critic, has been towards a statement about the nature of man and his present predicament. And this impulse has discharged itself in his effort to bring to bear upon the modern, secular 'liberal' mind a radical catharsis.

Mr. Trilling's thought strikes us as being, first of all, informed by an awareness that has been for him, one feels, deeply disturbing and that has perhaps largely activated his entire effort at bringing into question what we call the 'liberal' mind: it is of the incompetence of that mind before the awful freight of moral ambiguity with which human life is so heavily laden, its tendency to narrow and simplify the human world by laying human difficulties at the door of the 'social order,' its too easy transcendence of the modulations and complexities of experience. Mr. Trilling is, of course, quite as self-conscious and deliberately circumspect when he talks about 'liberalism' as the rest of us have become when we use the word; but he escapes certain embarrassing difficulties that those who talk about 'liberalism' have come to be involved in by being, at least most of the time, a student not of ideas but of ideology. As a cultural critic he is generally concerned with 'the whole evanescent context' in which the explicit statements of our culture are made, that part of it 'which is made up of half-

¹ *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (Viking Press, New York, 1950). The essays which Mr. Trilling has included in this volume are as follows: 'Reality in America,' 'Sherwood Anderson,' 'Freud and Literature,' 'The Princess Casamassima,' 'The Function of the Little Magazine,' 'Huckleberry Finn,' 'Kipling,' 'The Immortality Ode,' 'Art and Neurosis,' 'The Sense of the Past,' 'Tacitus Now,' 'Manners, Morals and the Novel,' 'The Kinsey Report,' 'F. Scott Fitzgerald,' 'Art and Fortune,' and 'The Meaning of a Literary Idea.' Subsequent quotations, except where otherwise indicated, will be from this volume.

² *Matthew Arnold* (Columbia University Press, New York, 1949, rev. ed.).

uttered or unuttered or unutterable expressions of value,' 'which is not art, or religion, or morals, or politics, and yet it relates to all these highly formulated departments of culture.' He is dealing, that is to say, with that part of culture in which assumption rules, and, in particular, with those assumptions which we loosely call liberalism—assumptions which are held by those members of our educated class who have 'a ready if mild suspiciousness of the profit motive, a belief in progress, science, social legislation, planning, and international co-operation, perhaps especially where Russia is in question.' Persons, that is, who, when you mention philosophy think of John Dewey, who read *The New Republic* and *Partisan Review*, who belong to the Americans for Democratic Action, who are likely to have a Picasso reproduction in their living-rooms, and who hold enlightened views on Negroes and Jews.

That aspect of modern culture which draws its sanctions from the Enlightenment has, of course, been brought under considerable pressure in the last two decades by critics otherwise so removed from each other as D. H. Lawrence and Christopher Dawson, Jean-Paul Sartre and Nicolas Berdyaev. But not usually has the indictment been based upon its *abdication* from mind, which is Mr. Trilling's charge: 'in the very interest of affirming its confidence in the power of the mind,' he declares, 'it inclines to constrict and make mechanical its conception of the nature of mind.' Its very devotion to intelligence betrays it into a dismissal of those dimensions of human nature and experience which lie beneath the levels of intellection—which is, for Trilling, a failure of mind: in such terms he states his central objection to the liberal imagination.

And hand in hand with this truncation of the enterprise of mind at the point where that which lies beneath mind comes into view goes a certain dogmatic metaphysic by which Reality is conceived as 'whatever is external and hard, gross unpleasant'; there goes a certain distrust of 'subjectivity,' of the internal, of complication and modu-

lation, of irony; the assumption that knowledge and moral perceptiveness can never get us through gross dangers and difficulties. In the liberal metaphysic, 'reality is always material reality, hard, resistant, unformed, impenetrable and unpleasant. And that mind is alone felt to be trustworthy which most resembles this reality by most nearly reproducing the sensations it affords.'

Mr. Trilling points to Vernon Parrington, the now famous author of *Main Currents in American Thought* (whom he rightly feels has had an influence on our conception of American culture not equaled by that of any other writer of the last two decades), as a large instance of this nominalistic tendency of the American liberal mind. Parrington, with his usual heaviness of hand, in assessing our national literature, read Hawthorne, for example, out of the court which he reserved for such heroes as James Branch Cabell, because he regarded Hawthorne's researches into 'the hidden, furtive recesses of the soul'⁴ as irrelevant to a democratic culture; Hawthorne, he said, was 'forever dealing with shadows,'⁵ as were Melville and Henry James, whose sceptical pessimism he dismissed as 'escapist.'⁶ And perhaps these men were dealing with shadows, but, as Trilling reminds us, shadows are also part of 'reality'—though they are just that part between which and the whole state of mind of which Parrington is evocative there can be no transaction, for their prehension demands the moral dialectic that Hawthorne and Melville and James were such masters of and that the liberal mind so profoundly distrusts. So Parrington still stands as the great diarist of the liberal imagination, because he expresses its chronic uneasiness before evidences of style and thought in literature and art, its chronic 'belief that there exists an opposition between reality and mind and that one must enlist oneself in the party of reality.'

Mr. Trilling is, then, criticizing the liberal mind, not for its excessive rational-

⁴, ⁵, ⁶ The phrases are Parrington's.

ism, the judgment which has most often been brought to bear upon it by religious critics, but for its deep-seated fear of the intellect—an attitude which, with great cogency, he illustrates by defining certain of its doctrinaire indulgences and severities with respect to modern literature. There is, for example, the inevitable juxtaposition of Theodore Dreiser and Henry James which suggests itself because both men addressed themselves essentially to the same moral and social fact—a juxtaposition which brings us immediately to 'the dark and bloody crossroads where literature and politics meet'; and 'perhaps nothing,' Trilling suggests, 'is more typical of American liberalism than the way it has responded to the respective qualities of the two men.' The liberal critic, we are reminded, is likely to grant you James' deeply penetrating awareness of tragedy, of irony, of the multitudinous distinctions contained by experience, his devotion 'to an extraordinary moral perceptiveness,' his possession of 'the electric qualities of mind.' But he must then, Trilling observes, put James 'to the ultimate question: of what use, of what actual political use, are his gifts and their intention? . . . of what possible practical value in our world of impending disaster can James's work be?' The liberal critic wants James, that is, to save us at once from disaster. But it seems never to occur to him to bring Dreiser's ideas, in this radical way, to the bar of practicality—his 'dim, awkward speculation . . . his self-justification . . . his lust for "beauty" and "sex" and "living" and "life itself," and . . . the showy nihilism which always seems to him so grand a gesture in the direction of profundity.' On the contrary, he is honored for his very faults—his stylistic crudities, his lack of wit, his inflexibility of mind, his provincialism being taken as exemplary of a virtuous democracy. 'No liberal critic asks the question of Dreiser whether his moral preoccupations are going to be useful in confronting the disasters that threaten us.' His clumsiness, his stupidity, his crudity are forgiven because his faults, it is assumed, are 'the sad, lovable, honorable faults of reality itself, or of America itself

—huge, inchoate, struggling toward expression, caught between the dream of raw power and the dream of morality.' And as Trilling considers the unequal justice that liberal criticism has accorded James and Dreiser, the accent of his speech grows angry and indignant:

We live, understandably enough, with the sense of urgency; our clock, like Baudelaire's, has had the hands removed and bears the legend, "It is later than you think." But with us it is always a little too late for mind, yet never too late for honest stupidity; always a little too late for understanding, never too late for righteous, bewildered wrath; always too late for thought, never too late for naive moralizing. We seem to like to condemn our finest but not our worst qualities by pitting them against the exigency of time.

But not only does Mr. Trilling find examples of liberalism's disconcertion before the internal, before 'the variety and modulations of the human story,' and of its abdication from mind, in its indulgence of Dreiser and its severity with James, in the cultural history of Parrington, and in the novels of Sherwood Anderson. He goes on, in a devastating essay, to consider from the same standpoint what has been perhaps the most impressive enterprise of social statistics that our generation has seen, what we have come to call 'the Kinsey Report.'⁷ And he takes no very great pains to conceal his profound displeasure with its physicalistic procedure of separating the sexual life from the total psychic structure, as if the whole actuality of sex were anatomical and physiological. He has no difficulty at all in showing that its 'whole conception of a sexual experience is totally comprised by the physical act' and that its 'principles of evidence are entirely quantitative,' leading inevitably to the conclusion that 'the more the merrier.'

The Report never suggests that a sexual experience is anything but the discharge of specifically sexual tension and therefore seems to conclude that frequency is always the sign of a robust sexuality. Yet masturbation in

⁷ *Sexual Behavior in the Human Male*, by Alfred C. Kinsey, Wardell B. Pomeroy, and Clyde E. Martin. Philadelphia: Saunders, 1948.

children may be and often is the expression not of sexuality only but of anxiety. In the same way, adult intercourse may be the expression of anxiety; its frequency may not be so much robust as compulsive.

Or again, the Report's awkwardness in the handling of ideas involving 'a specifically human situation' reveals itself, Trilling suggests, in its position on the matter of male potency:

The folk feeling, where it is formulated on the question . . . holds that male potency is not to be measured, as the Report measures it, merely by frequency, but by the ability to withhold orgasm long enough to bring the women to climax. This is also the psycho-analytic view. . . This view is very strongly resisted by the Report. The denial is based on mammalian behavior . . . The Report . . . concludes that the human male who ejaculates immediately upon intromission "is quite normal. . . ." Indeed, the Report finds it odd that the term "impotent" should be applied to such rapid responses. "It would be difficult to find another situation in which an individual who was quick and intense in his responses was labeled anything but superior. . . ."

But by such reasoning the human male who is quick and intense in his leap to the lifeboat is natural and superior, however inconvenient. . . his speed and intensity may be to the wife he leaves standing on the deck, as is also the man who makes a snap judgment, who bites his dentist's fingers. . . who is incontinent of his feces.

The Report's fundamental weakness is, of course, its 'extravagant fear of all ideas that do not seem to be, as it were, immediately dictated by simple physical fact,' as is indicated by the adroit involutions in which it becomes involved frequently in its argument *de animalibus*, whereby it seeks to establish the acceptability or moral normality of certain usually taboo sexual practices on the authority of animal behavior. The fundamental intention of the Report, however, in its large generosity, Mr. Trilling appreciates and defines as that of establishing 'a democratic pluralism of sexuality.' To this end it accumulates its myriads of facts and data, its tables and

charts. It wants to convince us that the criteria by which we customarily judge sexual conduct are not relevant to the actual sexual behavior of the population. 'But then it goes on to imply that there can be only one standard for the judgment of sexual behavior—that is, sexual behavior as it actually exists; which is to say that sexual behavior is not to be judged at all. . . .' And thus the cultural event constituted by the Report's production and the unprecedentedly extensive reception of it by the American public provides another example of 'an almost intentional intellectual weakness' of the liberal mind:

It goes with a nearly conscious aversion from making intellectual distinctions, almost as if out of the belief that an intellectual distinction must inevitably lead to a social discrimination or exclusion. We might say that those who most explicitly assert and wish to practice the democratic virtues have taken it as their assumption that all social facts—with the exception of exclusion and economic hardship—must be *accepted*, not merely in the scientific sense but also in the social sense, in the sense, that is, that no judgment must be passed on them, that any conclusion drawn from them which perceives values and consequences will turn out to be "undemocratic."

* * *

By now, then, the shape of Mr. Trilling's own mind must have begun to show itself. It is a mind which unceasingly cultivates an awareness of the complexity and ambiguity of human experience, which prefers the excursive to the direct statement because of its dread of oversimplifying the human fact, and which above all seeks to be true to itself, as mind, by keeping a hold upon those facets of that fact which do not easily lend themselves to subsumption under the usual categories of mind. One feels that it is by accepting this burden that he has sought to assume for the intelligentsia of the left an *exemplary* role. His presiding motive has been, from within its citadels, to rescue liberalism from its besetting temptation to oversimplify, to extenuate, to reduce the facts of experience

to the syntactical conjunctions which are the essence of logic but not of life. And so he has produced what is perhaps for our generation the definitive study of Matthew Arnold, who, though an ardent liberal, declared 'at a time when official thought was announcing the Englishman's ascent to the heights of human possibility. . . that the modern man was crippled and incomplete.'⁸ He has also given us our best study of E. M. Forster, being drawn to him as to Arnold because of Forster's critical detachment from many of the characteristic certitudes of modern culture, because of his 'unremitting concern' with what Trilling calls 'moral realism,' with 'the contradictions, paradoxes and dangers of living the moral life.'⁹ And he is also drawn to men like Hawthorne and James, Melville and Mark Twain, Scott Fitzgerald and Faulkner because they are honest and tell the truth, because they are rarely surprised and do not suppose that the order of human affairs rests upon any simple logic, because they do not flinch before 'the idea of good-and-evil.' Above all perhaps, though, is Trilling drawn to Freud, about whom, however, he is never simple. He knows that Thomas Mann's portrait of Freud, as a poet wholly committed to the 'night side' of life, is not altogether true, that his 'Apollonian' side is by no means secondary and accidental. He knows, that is, how deeply rooted is Freud's rationalistic positivism and how it 'supports all the ideas of the Enlightenment that deny validity to myth or religion.' But he yet regards the Freudian man as

a creature of far more dignity and far more interest than the man which any other modern system has been able to conceive. Despite popular belief to the contrary, man, as Freud conceives him, is not to be understood by any simple formula (such as sex) but is rather an inextricable tangle of culture and biology. And not being simple, he is not simply good; he has, as Freud says somewhere, a kind of hell within him from which arise everlastingly the impulses which threaten his civilization. He has the faculty of imagining for himself more in the way of pleasure

and satisfaction than he can possibly achieve . . . His best qualities are the result of a struggle whose outcome is tragic. Yet he is a creature of love. . .

One is always aware in reading Freud how little cynicism there is in his thought. His desire for man is only that he should be human, and to this end his science is devoted.

So Trilling is drawn to the wisdom of Freud because it 'does not narrow and simplify the human world . . . but on the contrary opens and complicates it.'

Now this being the kind of mind that Mr. Trilling brings into the service of his criticism, may we not ask in what ways it defines its own limitations? What is its own partiality, its own unilateralism? To this question Mr. Trilling himself, I believe, suggests the answer when he remarks at one point in an essay, originally commemorative of the tenth anniversary of the *Partisan Review* ('The Function of the Little Magazine'), that our present fate, for better or worse, is political and that 'the only possibility of enduring it is to force into our definition of politics every human activity and every subtlety of every human activity.' This is extreme language, but it is not, I think, born out of those desperate visions of 'losses' worse even than that of life which today often control the liberal mind—'losses of civilization, personality, humanness.' The emotion of despair is, for one thing, a luxury which our subject denies himself; and, furthermore, the notion of evil is never theatricalized by Mr. Trilling until it becomes an utterly disembodied principle, constitutive of life itself, as is sometimes the case with some of our disaffected modern poets and novelists (Robert Penn Warren, for example, or, among the orthodox, Graham Greene). His desire 'to force into our definition of politics every human activity and every subtlety of every human activity' is, on the contrary, dictated by the deepest suasion of his mind which is secular and humanist; and we should not forget, as Mr. R. W. B. Lewis has commented in his recent statement on Trilling, that 'what identifies the humanist

⁸ *Matthew Arnold*, p. 79.

⁹ *E. M. Forster* (New Directions, New York, 1943).

in any age is the habit of subsuming metaphysics under politics.' ¹⁰ This distaste for metaphysics and eschatology shows itself, of course, at several points in Trilling's criticism but never very plainly, for there it is involved in his polemic against the eschatological resistance to history which is motivated in the liberal mind by political factors. He laments its 'coldness to historical thought,' its secret hope 'that man's life in politics, which is to say, man's life in history, shall come to an end'; he regrets its desire 'to elect a way of life which shall be satisfactory once and for all, time without end.' But this is the sort of thing that has often been said before by men like Niebuhr and Tillich, to whose party Trilling certainly does not belong and from whose world his own demands finally to be distinguished not in terms of his criticism but in terms of his creative work as novelist. For it is in his brilliant dialectical novel, *The Middle of the Journey*, that the special quality of Trilling's humanism, in its subsumption of metaphysics under politics, becomes unambiguous by reason of its engagement there with the religious issue in its purity. He has accepted, we feel, Henry James' definition of 'reality' as 'the things we cannot possibly not know'; and *The Middle of the Journey*, with its final dismissal of the religious enterprise, registers itself upon us as Mr. Trilling's declaration—all his criticisms of liberalism notwithstanding—of commitment to the deepest conviction of the Enlightenment, that the ultimate reality, the thing that cannot possibly not be known, is the human polity. It is here, in other words, that his own mind defines its limitations, and so, in conclusion, it is to his novel that we must go, for, though antedating his most recent volume by three years, it yet completes the circle of definition that I have been trying to draw around his thought.

Like Dante, in the middle of the journey of his life, John Laskell, a young specialist in public housing, discovers, during an

almost fatal illness in the late thirties, the disorientation of his successful, sophisticated New York life and retires for a summer to a farming district in the Connecticut Valley to spend his period of convalescence with his closest friends, Nancy and Arthur Croom, with whom he has shared in the past not only a deep personal affection but also the kind of attraction to the Communist Party that I suppose we have in mind when we speak of the 'fellow-traveler.' Laskell's visit with the Crooms never becomes, though, quite the exhilarating, renewing thing that association with them in the past has been, for, having so narrowly escaped death, he wants naturally in some way to communicate to these dearest friends of his something of the strange, illuminating experience that he has undergone. But they refuse to share it, not being able to comprehend the sensations of illness and disease within their light, optimistic, rational world: to them the recognition of the nullification of life that death threatens is a kind of abdication from decency and good form. And he is saddened by this as he realizes that in so far as his encounter with death has made him a different person his life is now that much removed from his friends.

Laskell has learned, just before his departure from New York, of the defection from the Communist Party of Gifford Maxim, whom both he and the Crooms in the past have admired so much, perhaps because Maxim's selfless submission to the Party discipline has for them been a kind of expiation of the guilt which they feel over their own un-committed ambivalence. Maxim comes to Laskell, after having been unheard of for several months because of 'underground' work, confesses his apostasy, and asks that he use his influence with Kermit Simpson, a wealthy sponsor of leftist causes, to secure for him a position on Simpson's dim little progressive magazine *The New Era*. His point is that in view of the possibility of his assassination by his former colleagues of the Party (his work having been so 'special') the only means by which he may protect himself is completely

¹⁰ R. W. B. Lewis: 'Lionel Trilling and the New Stoicism,' *The Hudson Review*, Vol. III. No. 2, Summer, 1950, p. 314.

to break out of the obscurity that has surrounded his life for the past year during the period of his 'underground' work: "... if I don't exist, something can happen to me. No one would know it, no one would report it. . . I must have a continuous existence, an office I go to every day, so that it is perfectly clear that if one day I don't appear, questions will be asked. I must be on record to be safe. I want my existence established on, say, the masthead of *The New Era*. The more I exist and the more I exist publicly, the safer I am.'

Laskell reluctantly secures an assistant editorship for Maxim, whose first contribution to *The New Era* is an article entitled 'Spirit and Law' which turns out to be a penetrating exegesis of Melville's *Billy Budd* as a political parable of the tragedy of Spirit and of Law in the world of Necessity. Maxim quickly retells 'the story of Claggart's perverse persecution of Budd, his denouncing Budd to the Captain for mutinous schemes, the Captain's dislike of Claggart and his intuitive trust of Budd, the confrontation of Budd and Claggart in the Captain's cabin, the accusation made, Budd's confusion and anger rendering him incapable of speech, so that his answer had to be his blow on Claggart's temple, Claggart's falling dead and the Captain's cry, "Struck dead by an angel of God. Yet the angel must hang."' Maxim also retells the scene of the hanging at dawn, quoting Billy's final utterance as the noose was placed around his neck, "God bless Captain Vere!" Now, on Maxim's view, Billy, the boy whose natural goodness was so great that everyone loved him, is pure Spirit, and Captain Vere is Law in the world of Necessity—though, of course, he is aware that Billy is not wholly pure, that he has a flaw which is symbolized by his impediment of speech under great emotional stress, that he has sinned, "despite the fact that the man against whom he directs his anger is Evil itself. His blow is given out of an impotence." And yet, Maxim goes on to say,

... as Spirit, Billy is pure enough to make the tragedy of Captain Vere. Vere must rule

the world of Necessity because Claggart—Evil—exists. The belief of the modern progressive is that Spirit should find its complete expression at once. Everything that falls short of the immediate expression of Spirit is believed to be an ignominious moral inadequacy. To such minds, Captain Vere is culpable because he does not acquit Billy in defiance of all Law. To them, Vere's suffering at being unable to do so is a mere sentimentality. It is even an hypocrisy. The modern progressive believes that he will not palter with anything less than perfection. He considers this the mark of his virtue. But perhaps it is rather the mark of his lack of belief in the truth and reality of Spirit. He cannot believe in Spirit unless it is established in institutions. He cannot believe that he really exists as Spirit unless he sees himself matched exactly in external forms. . . Melville's perception is that Spirit and the Law that is established in the world of Necessity are kin, yet discontinuous. It is not merely that Vere understands that Billy is his son. . . it is that Billy understands that Vere is his father and blesses him in his last words. . .

As long as Evil exists in the world, Law must exist, and it—not Spirit—must have the rule. And Vere's is the suffering, his is the tragic choice of God the Father. . . But we cannot understand Vere's suffering choice because we do not understand tragedy. And we do not understand tragedy because we do not understand love.

Significantly, Laskell's reaction to the article is one of disgust and 'intellectual nausea,' an 'odor of corruption' coming to him and freeing him from his old enchantment with his former friend. But his response to the transformed Maxim has finally to be seen as one part of a gnostical dialectic the other part of which is his final comprehension of the Crooms, to which he is brought by his gradual perception of their true relation to Duck and Emily Caldwell.

Duck Caldwell is the handyman who does odd-jobs for the Crooms, a local scapegrace and impoverished descendant of a once important Connecticut family, whose manual skills, whose rootedness in the soil, whose raciness of speech and lewdly outspoken rejection of all vague gentility recall

the gamekeeper in *Lady Chatterley*. Nancy and Arthur Croom see him as 'a high manifestation of ordinary life,' and when they speak of him, their tone takes on a brooding, elegaic solicitude that seems to Laskell somehow inappropriate. They acknowledge, in an abstract way, his coarse salacity, his undependability; but their compassionate indulgence of Duck urges them to insist that he is the victim of his social order, that 'he has his own way of doing things and he can't be hurried'—a characteristic which, presumably, he shares with reality itself. And yet Laskell knows how much his friends, with all their activistic progressivism and liberal visions, want to hurry other manifestations of reality; why, then, he wonders is 'the reality of Duck exempt from the general hurry? Why should he alone, of all things, be allowed to move at his own pace?'

The Crooms are, of course, in their exemption of Duck from the demands of mature responsibility, an example of those liberal intellectuals about whom Mr. Trilling has had occasion to speak in the most explicit terms in his book on E. M. Forster—who, when they speak of themselves, think chiefly of their own good will and prefer 'not to know that the good will generates its own problems, that the love of humanity has its own vices and the love of truth its own insensibilities.' They remain unaware of that paradox of our natures (of which Mr. Trilling speaks in his essay 'Manners, Morals, and the Novel,' *The Liberal Imagination*) which 'leads us, when once we have made our fellow men the objects of our enlightened interest, to go on to make them the objects of our pity, then of our wisdom, ultimately of our coercion.'

The Crooms' charity towards Duck does not, however, embrace his wife Emily, whose anachronistic bohemianism, *à la* Greenwich Village of the early nineteen-twenties, appears simply absurdly ridiculous to them—as it is. But then the foolish articulations of her intellect—as when she chirps about how 'wonderful' Spengler is—do not wholly define Emily, as Laskell

comes gradually to realize, for, in their beautiful and vivacious little daughter Susan, Duck and Emily, whatever their faults, are somehow redeemed. Laskell does not, of course, find Emily very interesting either as an intellectual or as a rebel.

She really did not have the gift for being either. But in her function as Susan's mother with her worry about Susan's education, in her function as housekeeper with her little prides in the midst of poverty, in her not at all striking talk about ordinary things, Laskell had found her more and more impressive. She had a womanly dignity that did not depend on intellect—a kind of biological intelligence.

But the Crooms do not see this, because, for all of their fine liberal concerns for the lower classes, they have no real regard for their concrete singularity, for the rich idiosyncrasy of their individual humanity. Their benevolence remains essentially abstract in its quality, and this is why it is so easy for them to reduce the human individual to a statistical unit and thus to exempt him from responsibility.

It is Maxim who finally forces the issue, on the occasion of little Susan's death. The child has had throughout her short life a serious heart ailment—a fact, though, that Emily has successfully concealed from Susan and from everyone else, even from her father, fearing that Duck, in his primitive robustness, if he knew, would not 'respect' his little daughter. Only to Laskell has she revealed her secret. But then comes the tragic occasion. There is the annual church bazaar, and Susan is on the program: she is to recite the four stanzas that Blake prefixed to *Milton*. Laskell, after the child has learned the poem in the absurdly old-fashioned elocutionary manner recommended by her mother, coaches her, and advises her against stamping her foot in a passion of refusal at the line: 'I will *not* cease from mental fight.' He also suggests that the line ought to be read on a level: '*I will not cease. . .*' He regrets his interference afterwards, but Susan, having been persuaded of the rightness of his advice, insists upon altering her presentation. But

then on the afternoon of the bazaar, in her recital of the poem, when she comes to the line, unthinkingly she does it in the original manner with the accompanying stamp of the foot. Immediately she realizes her error, and her dismay is so great that she is unable to go on until her friend gives her the proper cue. Her childish aplomb returns, though, and she finally carries the thing off with several triumphant flourishes amidst the loud applause of the audience. Her father, however, has, unnoticed, entered the church during the recital, and, petulant and irritable in his drunkenness, lurches angrily forward as Susan leaves the stage, saying to her: "A fine one you are. A disgrace." And as the stunned little girl looks into her father's face, he strikes her twice: she falls, and when she is picked up, she is dead. Her heart has failed.

Laskell is deeply grieved over the child's death, not only because during the summer that he has spent with the Crooms he has come to have a deep affection for her, but also because he feels implicated, he feels responsible. Gifford Maxim, who has been present, not knowing the details of Laskell's relationship with Susan, supposes that he feels responsible in the Pauline sense—because we are all members one of the other. But this, of course, is not what Laskell means. He refuses, he says, the kind of religious acceptance of responsibility towards the human community and the burden of the kind of metaphysical guilt that have become meaningful for Maxim, reasoning that Maxim simply wants now to involve 'us all' in the guilt that he feels over his past membership in the Party, as he once wanted to involve 'us all' in his virtue.

The Crooms, too, are deeply affected by Susan's death. They do not regard Duck as a murderer; he was, they say, 'just the agent of fate.' They do not hold him responsible. "It's not his fault," Nancy insists, and Arthur helpfully explains to Maxim that she means "that social causes, environment, education or lack of educa-

tion, economic pressure, the character-pattern imposed by society, in this case a disorganized society, all go to explain and account for any given individual's actions." "Yes," says Nancy, "We can't say he's to blame personally, individually. But," she then adds, "I can't stand the idea of having him around me. Not that I'd be afraid, but I'd always be thinking that this man killed his child." And this is Maxim's reply:

"Nancy's dilemma is an inevitable one. She refuses to say that Caldwell has any responsibility, any blame or guilt. And then she refuses to allow him to come near her. . . . I reverse your whole process. I believe that Duck Caldwell—like you or me or any of us—is wholly responsible for his acts. . . . And for eternity. . . . That is what gives him value in my eyes—his eternal, everlasting responsibility. . . . And yet in my system there is one thing that yours lacks. In my system, although there is never-ending responsibility, there is such a thing as mercy. . . . Duck can be forgiven. I can personally forgive him because I believe that God can forgive him. . . . For you—no responsibility for the individual, but no forgiveness. For me—ultimate, absolute responsibility for the individual, but mercy . . ."

In this moment Trilling gives Laskell his supreme moment of illumination, and he has him say: "An absolute freedom from responsibility—that much of a child none of us can be. An absolute responsibility—that much of a divine or metaphysical essence none of us is." By this both the Crooms and Maxim are angered, because, Trilling suggests, their various forms of the absolutist mind cannot tolerate an idea in modulation. And Laskell goes on to perceive the Crooms and Maxim as but two sides of the same coin: the Crooms, because of their complete disregard for the individual, shall be led into the furiously ruthless absolutism of the Communist Party; Maxim, in his pessimism and despair, shall also destroy the human community out of disgust and hatred: in his conversion to Christianity he is simply riding the pendulum. And thus he is disposed of by Laskell and by Trilling.

Now I said earlier that the 'limitations' of Mr. Trilling's own mind define themselves in *The Middle of the Journey*, and I trust that by now my meaning has become clear. It is a mind of the type whose limitations and whose nobility, as I have already suggested, should be called humanist. He is, as were Montaigne and John Stuart Mill and Matthew Arnold, a centrist who would give man his full stature—'neither beast nor angel.' He has, as he says of E. M. Forster, no taste for the unconditioned, whether it be the political *terminus ad quem* of modern liberalism or the religious absolute of Christian orthodoxy. He cultivates always the sophistication that embraces 'the idea in modulation,' and he has no *goût* for extreme ideas: for sin, guilt, alienation, and God. His is an intelligence that is straightforward and—this is the simplest and the best word—honest, that forces him to recognize the intellectual and spiritual failures of the liberal mind, but that remains radically, though perhaps not incorrigibly, secular. And surely there is a kind of fine, unrelenting honesty in his portrait of Gifford Maxim, whose exposition of Christian doctrine is usually as scrupulous as Karl Barth's. But then there is a limit to Mr. Trilling's honesty, for he takes advantage of Maxim and is not, finally, disinterested in his handling of him. He suggests again and again that Maxim, in his conversion from Communism to orthodox

Christianity, is simply riding the pendulum, that, in fact, the very entertainment of the faith to which Maxim finally comes is simply another integer in the series of liberal illusions. And at this point we feel that Mr. Trilling is not quite fair and, though he has himself professed his abiding interest in ideology, that he has too much capitulated to the occupational scepticism of the ideologue. Indeed, his very decision to consider the relevance of Christianity to the intellectual confusion and political tragedy of the modern world in terms of its profession by a renegade Communist (whom he manages to make appear on occasion as a graduate of the catechumenical chambers of the redoubtable Monsignor Sheen) bespeaks an almost temperamental bias. In *The Middle of the Journey* Mr. Trilling never says Christianity is not true: he only objects to it because it is held by an ex-Communist; and though it is unkind to hurl such invective at so gifted and humane a spirit, it is perhaps not altogether inappropriate to remark that such polemical tactics are not very far removed from those of Senator McCarthy.

Whatever may be the limitations of Mr. Trilling's vision, though—and perhaps they should not be too much stressed—he has important things to say to us today, and they should be listened to by the Christian community.

THE LAYMEN'S MOVEMENT AND THE ACADEMIES

By ALEXANDER MILLER

Readers of *Christianity and Society* will know that, following visits of Fellowship members to Germany since the war, contact has been made and kept with the Evangelical Academy at Bad Boll near Stuttgart. This centre has been in some sense the core and inspiration of the momentous Laymen's Movement which now shows signs of transforming the whole life of the Evangelical Church in Germany. It has been possible to send several hundred dollars this past year for the support of the work, and we hope to go on with this contribution of money.

Meanwhile it becomes possible to give some account of what is afoot in Germany, not only to point up the importance of maintaining the small contribution we make as a Fellowship, but for reducing the incidence of weak hands and feeble knees this side of the Atlantic.*

First about Bad Boll itself. Its work began in 1945. It was conceived as a centre in which a sustained attempt would be made to overcome "the psychological and spiritual disease which has attacked the body of the German people (in) the separation of political, social and scientific life from its spiritual and moral obligations." Up to 1949 eight more academies had been started, two of them in the Russian zone, and 14,000 representatives of the professions—politicians, industrialists, workers, journalists, doctors, teachers, students, farmers, artists, writers, book dealers, social workers—took part in a total

of 300 courses. Invitations to these courses are issued "without any reference to the personal, political or religious attitudes of the persons invited," so that "the Academies have become known throughout the country as places where the Christian faith is being applied to practical life and not just forced upon people as a rigid pattern. . . . Although every day begins with a common meditation on a chapter of the Bible, during the rest of the day there are also lectures by non-Christians. This brings about a lively exchange of ideas. Perhaps this is the reason why at many conferences the number of non-Christians exceeds the number of Christians. These people realise that we try to take their questions seriously and that we do not expect any decision from them which they have not recognized as being a decision for the truth.

"This was recognized very gratefully by the labor leaders, consisting of officials of trade unions and workers' organizations. They came with very great suspicions, expecting all kinds of tricks to 'catch' them. Finally, it was possible to arrange for a conference of about 60 men, one-third of whom were Communists. The conference was a hot, spiritual battle, lasting for several days, during which neither side gave any quarter. All the sins of the Church were held before us. We admitted openly where the Church had neglected her duty. And then we showed to them the close affinity between the biological materialism of Hitler and the economic materialism of Stalin, and their common methods. . . . All the participants declared that they realized the right of the Church to speak in this matter and that the questions put by the Church cannot be evaded. Subsequently, there were many more conferences of this type, also joint conferences of industrialists and labor leaders."

* This account draws on a recent report from the Academies themselves, notes on a 1950 visit to Bad Boll by Robert Miller, and a long report by the special correspondent of *The Frontier* magazine of Great Britain on the climactic Laymen's Conference at Essen, which took place August 22nd to 27th. We acknowledge our indebtedness to all these sources.

Those who know the plight of the Church in Europe in its relation to workers' groups, and the particular history of Protestantism in Germany, will mark the significance of all this. Its importance is confirmed by the report of a recent visitor, who writes:

"The latest workers' meeting was one of the most successful yet held at Bad Boll, in terms of the atmosphere of openness that was manifest. There have been interesting conferences in which various extreme positions, Communist and Christian, trade union and big business argued with each other; but in this conference the extremes were not so strongly represented, and a more genuine meeting and discussion took place. Out-moded scientific conceptions, ill-founded criticisms of the Church were aired and discussed. The workers were open for informative material on these and other problems, and were grateful for lectures on the historical development of the present situation in China, on the problem of maintaining full employment and safeguarding freedom, on the proper wage policy that the government and industry should encourage, on the building of new class forms in Soviet Russia, and on the strength and weakness of democracy as a means of preserving freedom and safeguarding justice. But more important than any of these lectures and ensuing discussions were the daily Bible studies in which the men listened entranced for an hour and a half every morning to Pfarrer Kurt Wolf's unfolding of Jesus as the secret of nature, of history, and of our own individual life. . . . The workers who came to these meetings seem to be aware of the need for some sort of overall frame for their life and work; for a spiritual or metaphysical basis and goal. Marxism is for most of them a thing of the past, and developments in present-day Russia hold little allure or glamour for them. . . ."

These reports give something of the flavor of what goes on in the Academies themselves, but more significant still, it would seem, is the extending influence of the Laymen's Movement at the parish and

local level. First of all, there is the outreach of the Academies themselves: "Recently, an Economic Guild has been founded (by the Academy at Bad Boll), which consists of a large number of industrialists, among them some leading ones, who wish to follow a common program of economic and social justice. . . ."

"When the participants of a conference return home, they are organized in study groups to help them and their colleagues to go on the way of spiritual searching and responsible action in their professions. In many places, this aspect of the work is only in the beginning stage. . . ." "To deepen the scientific basis of our work, a Study Fellowship of the Evangelical Academy has been formed under the direction of Prof. Dr. Siebeck, one of the best-known German doctors of internal medicine. This Fellowship is supported jointly by all the Academies. It consists of 140 German scholars, mostly university professors. Here the attempt is made to clarify the unsolved problems raised in the Academies, through scientific meetings and publications. The scholars involved come from all the departments. . . ."

Of this local outreach we have no statistics, and no doubt the bulk of the work is less important than its character and quality. But even the bulk of the work of the Laymen's Movement becomes important and not a little exciting. At the Fall Conference of the Fellowship Eduard Heimann reported meeting Visser 't Hooft riding on a bicycle into the headquarters of the World Council of Churches, in a state of considerable spiritual exaltation. 't Hooft reported ecstatically (and 't Hooft is not readily given to ecstasy) that he had just returned from addressing 200,000 German churchmen in Essen. A report of this tremendous Assembly of German laymen has just come to hand, and a most moving story it is.

It was convened on the personal initiative of Reinhold von Thadden, and under the conviction that "The Church must come right out into the open and set up

the Cross in the very midst of the non-Christian and anti-Christian world. . . . 'We must proclaim quite unequivocally that we await salvation from no other in this world than from Him who is worshipped in all Christian churches as the only Redeemer of man. . . . The great question of our time is whether the so-called Christian West has at its disposal and in its midst the intellectual, moral and spiritual forces to which it owes its very existence, whether they are there at all, and whether they can be mobilized in time. This is supremely the concern of the laity, for they represent the Church on all the battlefields of the secular world in which the great decisions of our time are being made.' "

The delegates from every parish who attended the whole conference numbered well over 10,000. Both throughout the conference and in the final mass-meeting there were unauthorized delegates from the Russian zone. The President of the Federal Republic, Dr. Heuss, defined the theme of the Conference as not "Save the human *soul*!" but "Save the human *being*!" and for several days four sections of the conference—each numbering about 3000 persons—wrestled with the problems of Freedom, Family, Homeland, Faith.

"The Conference culminated in the gigantic meeting in the Stadium at which more than 180,000 people were present. They came from all parts of Germany, including Berlin and the Russian zone, to take part in this great act of witness. The Stadium itself has been built entirely from 200,000 cubic meters of rubble (hauled to

the site by 800 daily lorry loads over a period of many months) forming a 40 foot high mound of solid rubble round the oval-shaped arena. Bleakly alone above the surface of the asphalt arena stands the forty-five foot high cross from the ruined Melanchthon Church in Essen (destroyed, except for the cross, in a raid in 1943). The stark symbolism of the Cross above the ruins was unforgettable. No less memorable was the sound of nearly 200,000 voices reciting the Lord's prayer together and singing, as the closing act of praise, 'Now thank we all our God'."

Dr. Visser 't Hooft brought the greetings of the World Council, spoke of the secret of ecumenical fellowship, and concluded:

"We are only strong in so far as we know that He is the victor. Dear Christians from the German lands: the earlier and the present-day history of your Church is of extraordinarily great importance for world Christendom. You have made some of the most glorious discoveries ever made by Christians. On the other hand, an eclipse of the sun has sometimes spread to other lands from Germany. Is it not true that a stream of blessing has always gone out from Germany when her men and women looked unto Jesus, and darkness and destruction when He was forgotten?"

It would seem that here is something into which we might well go on putting our two-bits' worth. And we might well, also, ask very gravely whether we are putting our American resources and opportunities to commensurate use.

THE FUTABA COOPERATIVE FARM

By SAM FRANKLIN

Fifty miles east of Tokyo forty-five repatriated families, whose total land amounts to about 130 acres, have built a little community, to know which is to be carried deep into the tragedies, problems, and possibilities of rural Japan. The men and women who cleared the land and established the Futaba Cooperative Farm had emigrated to Manchuria some years before the second world war. There they had organized themselves on a collective basis, which lent itself well to control from the top by the Japanese military. The tragic chapter in the history of these colonists began in August, 1945, when they had to flee before approaching Soviet forces. Collecting their most valuable possessions in a forty wagon train they sought refuge in a Korean village. On the way they were attacked and three of their number were killed. On August 29 they surrendered to Soviet forces. From this point on their history is one of refugee camps, rape, theft, disease, and starvation. Many mothers in the group to which they belonged in desperation drowned or strangled their own children. Their leader, Ishii San, at the beginning of the long winter pleaded with the Soviet headquarters for permission to return to their old village; when he was refused he asked that they kill him and free his little band. In the winter, without clothing or shelter, they became coolies of the Chinese. The younger women were gradually taken by the enemy soldiers, unless they managed to escape by disguising themselves as men or hiding under the rafters when searching parties came. Each day two or three died of cold. Ishii San writes, "I awoke dreading the sound of footsteps coming to my door, for it meant the announcement of another death." One hundred and thirty people died in two months. With the coming of spring the survivors "wandered as beggars" for fifty days in the streets of Chichiharu. Finally the opportunity for

repatriation came, and the remnant of the original colony, leaving behind them another seven women who were detained at the last moment looking, as their chronicle states, "like sheep begging in the slaughter house," were returned to Japan. On landing they were given the equivalent of about six dollars each. They decided to stick together and "to rebuild the new Japan with their hoes."

The forty-five families, reduced by disaster to an average of only three to the family, were allotted land by the government in Chiba Prefecture, which they cleared and put into cultivation. They retained their old leader and the old collective pattern. Two-room frame houses were built with amazing economy for all the families, in rows that bordered the tract of land. When I first became acquainted with the Farm in February of 1949 no one had any real knowledge of Christianity, though Ishii San had once been given a New Testament, which a sergeant discovered among his possessions when he was doing military service and immediately burned. Ishii San told me he felt its loss like that of a living friend. Being deeply interested in these pioneers because of their background, their form of economic organization, and their serious concern, born of their suffering, for spiritual light, I asked if I might start a Bible class on the Farm, and was immediately offered the use of the leader's house. The memory of those crowded rooms, with men, women and children seated Japanese style on the straw matting and overflowing to the outdoors, their appalling rags and their pale, intent faces, is one that will never leave me. Just at that time I was very eager to relate the students of the Union Theological Seminary in Tokyo, where I was teaching, to the rural problems of Japan, partly to supplement the strong intellectual and theolog-

ical emphasis of that institution with practical work, and partly to direct attention of the students to the rural half of Japan which is almost untouched as yet by the Gospel. With the help of a special grant from the Restoration Fund of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. we were able to move the automobile house trailer in which my family and I had lived till a few months before to the Futaba Farm and to make it the Seminary Rural Center. A young graduate of the previous year was located on the Farm as the resident pastor, and other students went out for work on Sundays or for whole weekends under his direction. The entire area within a radius of twenty-five miles of the center presented endless opportunity and challenge. Here some 1100 repatriated and settler families were desperately struggling to make a living. Two miles away fourteen repatriated families from Okinawa were living in a large barn, one family having about the space previously allowed a horse or cow. Some of these people were of middle class background—the barn dwellers including a doctor who continued to serve his people professionally, though his sole equipment appeared to me to consist of one bottle of medicine. In a short time contact had been made with numerous individuals and groups of seekers. A poor villager from fifteen miles away, troubled by conditions in his own community such as adulteration of the rice quotas, low family standards, and extreme poverty (we found children there who had never tasted meat) was drawn to our meetings and eventually received baptism. Following this another Seminary student began regular work for the village in his home.

A survey of the health problems of the people on and near the Farm revealed widespread infestation with intestinal parasites (one man had to undergo an operation and had eighty-seven removed) as well as malnutrition and the whole round of respiratory diseases related to tuberculosis. Routine chest X-rays made with a portable machine on twenty-seven members of the Farm yielded positive diagnoses on all. A

study of nutrition based on a meal by meal report of selected families showed many were getting only a small fraction of the animal protein needed. Of all the health problems, however, that of the intestinal parasites seemed in many ways to be the worst, not only because of the suffering it caused but also because of the humiliation of it. One feels revolted that human beings have to go through with what a chronic sufferer endures. The communists are reported to have financed much of their activities in Japan by smuggling in *santonin*, a Russian-produced drug that is a specific for many types of parasites, and selling it on the black market. Fortunately General Sams, head of the Occupation Health Service, was able to introduce another drug which is said to be even more effective. It was a great joy to us to have Christian doctors from Tokyo volunteer to go out to the Farm to hold clinics on Sunday afternoon. At present a young pediatrician, son of one of Japan's outstanding Christian scholars, is holding regular clinics.

We are deeply interested to watch the operation of the collective, a "kolkhoz" type of farm, in capitalist Japan. Already in 1949 five families, freed from all overhead pressure to remain, had left the collective and were farming on an individual basis. The remainder were further reduced by the withdrawal of sixteen more this year. In spite of this reduction in membership, one cannot avoid the impression of the superior efficiency of the collective as an agricultural unit. On the fifty mile journey from Tokyo to the Farm one passes countless individual farmsteads, whose number was increased by the land reform which General MacArthur effected. The national average for these farms is about two acres each. On none of them could mechanization be carried out sufficiently to free those who till them from the inhuman labor, similar to that of draft cattle, to which they are subjected. Only on the Futaba collective, with fields twenty and thirty acres in size, could cultivators, mowers, drills, and even light tractors be used efficiently. Livestock are a crying

need of Japan, but can be managed only with the greatest difficulty on the tiny two acre farms. On the Futaba Farm a dairy herd has already been started, consisting of seven heifers, and the forage and feed crops necessary for its maintenance can be tied in efficiently with the farming operations. Last but not least, production for home use can be carried out on a wholesale basis. Wheat grown on the Farm and threshed by machine (instead of by hand power as on many of the individual farms) is ground in a mill run by an electric motor, and the flour is made into excellent, whole-wheat bread in a Farm bakery. This bread is distributed to Farm members and sold to the surrounding neighborhood. In the same way, a kind of macaroni is produced from wheat and cooking oil is produced from peanuts and rape, through the use of machines practical for a community of this size but hardly within the reach of an individual family.

As to management, the old authoritarian type of organization, in which decisions were made at the top, tends to survive in the collective, but it is interesting to see the manager and the governing committee attempting to adjust the old pattern to the new spirit of democracy. At this point the introduction of Christianity worked both for and against the collective, for it stressed a sense of independence and personal responsibility. The resident pastor and I never attempted to take sides in questions of administration, though we made it clear that we hoped the collective would succeed. When we had opportunity we suggested a planning committee, including young people, who would give more thought to the future of the Farm, instead of leaving it to the small group elected for that purpose. It was typical of the spirit of the old feudalistic Japan that the leader at once remarked that the rank and file would be embarrassed to make suggestions if he were in the same room. However he made honest efforts to move in the direction of democracy, and in two years' time the atmosphere was very different. The young pastor was not slow to show

how Christian service could be rendered in a special way to the whole group in a collective where to so large an extent the good of each is the good of all. His special emphasis at the moment is interpreting the Christian basis of democracy.

In organization the Farm is surprisingly idealistic, reflecting the leader's conviction that it must exist not for monetary profits alone but for the sake of providing security and a richer community life for all its members. It does not recognize differences of skill in the division of the total income. At the time of the last withdrawal the long and rather un-embittered discussion seemed to express the frustration and weariness of the past ten years of grinding poverty and misfortune, rather than any basic convictions as to the inadequacy of the collective way of life. The defection was a blow to Ishii San, especially since it left a larger proportion of widows and the physically weak on his hands. By that time he himself was seriously considering Christianity, and when it was pointed out that a Christian in the collective would continue to cooperate with the seceders, he declared frankly that he wanted to hate them but that he would continue to treat them as friends if Christian faith required it, and he did.

One of the high points in the history of the Farm was a visit from Dr. Kagawa. The whole membership turned out to hear him, and seated on the ground out in the open they listened spell bound as he spoke to them about the Sermon on the Mount, illustrating it with drawings as he went along.

In the spring of 1950 a community building was completed in which the Seminary invested a total of three hundred dollars. As a result we have a building which in addition to serving as Farm office, clinic, granary, machinery shed, and library, provides a place for public worship which seats more than one hundred, and a smaller room for Sunday School and club meetings. There is perhaps a suggestion here for the

Church as a true community center in other small farm villages.

A landmark in the history of the Farm was the International Christian Work Camp, similar to those sponsored by the Friends and other organizations in the United States, which was held there last summer, utilizing parts of the new community building for dormitory, dining hall and kitchen. The campers were young people of both sexes, from Japan, China, the Philippines, and the United States. Their projects included digging drainage ditches, weeding fields Japanese fashion by hand, and the construction of a cattle barn. In their spare time they taught in neighboring villages and instructed the country people in the mysteries of square dancing. The local people were especially impressed because the father of the Filipino student had been cruelly killed by Japanese soldiers during the war. The campers made a lasting impression on the Farm people, for whom they embodied Christian love in action.

Experience with the Rural Center on the Futaba Farm is too brief for any generalizations, but it seems to point toward the following conclusions. (1) If rural Japan is to be won for Christ, Christianity must ally itself, though not identify itself, with dynamic programs of reform. Japanese villagers frequently state that they are in a blind alley. The emancipation that machine technology can offer the modern farmer is but a dream of a better world. No one has shown how the tiny Japanese farm plots can utilize modern methods of agriculture. Not infrequently villagers themselves speak longingly of the benefits to be derived from collective farming. Meanwhile the communists find the Japanese country-side, where the temporary benefits of inflation and the black market are fading, and all are groaning under heavy taxes and "quotas", to be a primary field for propaganda. The promise they hold out to the farmers is that under a soviet system government aid will be available for—collective farms! Their red flag

floated boldly within a town five miles from Futaba, and during the period of our work there they have made inroads even among the Christians. Too much of rural evangelism so far has evaded basic social issues or has over-simplified them. Rural evangelism in Japan is going to be an ideological struggle, and no presentation of the Gospel which overlooks the colossal tragedy of soul-searing poverty and economic contradictions is going to speak very convincingly to the Japanese farmer.

(2) Japanese rural evangelism is of paramount importance. The influence of the villages on Japanese culture has been decisive; it was the fanatical soldiers from the country whose devotion to the Emperor made possible the expansion of Japan in the imperialistic thirties. Rural evangelism is hard, but in these days of social change it is perhaps more nearly possible than in any other time. Political, economic, and family institutions are changing. Man's life can no longer be defined in terms of service to the Emperor. Young women are no longer content to have marriages arranged for them as if they were puppets in the hands of the family. I have sat in dark, flea-ridden farm houses while the question of whether women had rights of their own in marriage was being debated. From the angle of special opportunity, and from that of crucial importance in influencing the country that may sway the destiny of Asia, I don't see how this field can be overstressed.

(3) Christian missions must be in a special sense the builder of Christian community. In the troubled times ahead, the witness of the local Christian community, as Charles West and others have noted from the China situation, may be the most effective force for strengthening Christianity in the Orient. The rural community as a social unit lends itself in a special way to this purpose. It has geographical boundaries, in a country where the common word for community is so abstract it has no kind of geographical connotations. It lends itself also to the new stress on the sovereignty

of Christ in all departments of life. The challenge is to make economic and recreational activities, health, education, and all cultural enterprises on the local level reflect the love of God and man which is at the heart of our faith.

All of these things, I need hardly add, make me glad that we have a seminary center on a cooperative farm. Plans for the future include the introduction of better breeds of poultry for each household, the holding of farmers' Gospel schools and Christian leadership training institutes in the community building, organized experiments in raising the health level through better foods, and the establishment of home

industry to utilize the labor freed by the machine. Meanwhile the regular preaching of the Gospel goes on in six or seven centers and one small church has been established in a nearby town.

It was a heartening experience, moreover, in the closing weeks of 1950, to have Mr. Ishii come to me one day and announce quietly that he and his wife were ready to accept baptism. The service, including the Communion, was held in the new community building and was attended by collective and individual farmers and people from the surrounding community—a symbol of the ultimate unity that transcends all differences of social programs.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE BELIEF IN PROGRESS. By John Baillie. New York: Scribners, 1951. viii, 240 pp. \$2.75.

In these days of frequently flamboyant theological controversy, we have learned to expect from John Baillie incisive Christian thinking offered with Scottish sanity and humor. This latest volume is no exception.

Baillie's is the latest in the really notable succession of recent Christian works on the understanding of history. The title immediately invites comparison with J. B. Bury's famous book, *The Idea of Progress*. But Bury attempted only to trace objectively (and a bit skeptically) the development of the idea of progress in modern times. Baillie undertakes a more comprehensive task in a little less space: he places the idea of progress within the large framework of ancient and modern philosophies of history, and subjects it to critical analysis from the Christian viewpoint.

It was Judaeo-Christian belief, as Baillie shows, that introduced into Western thought the conception that history moves forward toward a goal. Modern thought embroidered the Christian idea with a series of heresies and largely lost the core of Christianity. The result was the modern faith in progress. This generalized belief and hope had little factual foundation, for empirical investigation gives evidence only for a measure of progress in techniques (whether of control of nature, social organization, or pure knowledge) and not progress in wisdom or spirituality. In his analyses of the evidences which history presents, of ancient and modern theories of history, and of the biblical contribution to Western thought, Baillie's mature and penetrating scholarship is at its best. There is probably no book on the subject more clear and readable.

After a cogent critique of modern progressivist illusions Baillie asks what hope

Christian faith, stripped of its latter-day garnishings, actually offers for historical progress. His New Testament exegesis, drawing in part upon Dodd and Cullmann, leads him to the conclusion that "Christian faith does offer us a very confident hope for the future course of terrestrial history" (p. 220). Specifically, Baillie tries to show that Paul and the early church expected an expansion of Christian faith across the whole earth (though of course not its universal acceptance) before the eschatological denouement of history. And Baillie himself sees a vision "of the increasing Christianization of the whole life of the community" (p. 225). This hope, he is inclined to say, promises not only a possibility, but an assurance (pp. 215-20).

In view of the temper of modern theology Baillie has certainly—however willingly—gone out on a limb. In the first place he has (like most of us, admittedly) selected his biblical texts and all but ignored those which tend to deny his viewpoint. And in the second place, he has made no attempt to examine the character of history itself to see whether it gives evidence of vindicating his faith. Hence he does not meet one serious question: even if the early church expected Christianity to expand throughout the earth, might it not have been mistaken, as it was in its immediate eschatological expectations?

A couple years ago Karl Löwith's brilliant work, *Meaning in History*, came to the conclusion that Christianity offered no doctrine of providence and no hope for historical progress (see *Christianity and Society*, Summer, 1949). Now Baillie (who makes no reference to Löwith) offers a remarkably hopeful viewpoint on the same set of issues. I, for one, would like to see both of these able authors shaken up in the same sack until each had thoroughly

faced the other's arguments. It just might be that a synthesis close to the truth would emerge.

ROGER L. SHINN

THE ETHICAL BASIS OF MEDICAL PRACTICE. *By Willard L. Sperry.* Foreword by J. Howard Means, M.D. Paul B. Hoeber, Inc. (Medical Book Department of Harpers.) 185 pp. \$2.50.

It is very encouraging to find a book on this important subject by so wise and experienced a minister as Dr. Sperry. It started as a lecture given to house officers at the Massachusetts General Hospital and the response was so immediate on the part of medical men that the lecture developed into a book.

The book has the great virtues one would expect from something written by Dr. Sperry. First, it is readable by the average doctor or medical student. Any one who has tried to write for that public outside the area of their immediate technical interest will know what an achievement this is. Secondly, it is concrete and practical, with many of the medical illustrations doctors love. Thirdly, it is balanced, helping its readers see the points in differing positions. The discussion of euthanasia is particularly good in this respect.

At the same time there are many surprising omissions and hesitations about the book, which seriously limit its usefulness. There is little discussion of the deeper relation between medicine and theology, except for a somewhat romanticized and over-familiar exposition of Albert Schweitzer's 'reverence for life.' There is no discussion of the meaning of suffering and its place in God's Kingdom. On the crucial question of the doctor's conception of his vocation in relation to society, Dr. Sperry sits very carefully upon the fence, incidentally making an inaccurate statement about the shilling charge for prescriptions in the British Medical Service on page 71. Psychiatry he probably avoided as a subject requiring separate treatment.

Despite its limitations, this is a useful book to put into the hands of medical men, which may speak to them where they are more readily than one with more penetrating and original insights. It may also encourage other Protestant ministers and doctors to do more work in a field which, apart from psychiatry, has been almost entirely neglected.

DANIEL JENKINS

THE PILLAR OF FIRE. *By Anton Stern.* New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1950. \$3.50.

No more searching spiritual pilgrimage has been written than this book by a Jewish convert to the Catholic Christian faith. Stern grew up in a liberal, mildly religious Jewish home in Bavaria and the reminiscences of childhood religious impressions are delightfully recorded. The Hitler madness which drove him out of Germany, first to England and then to Montreal uprooted him spiritually. He traversed the whole history of modern man in his pilgrimage. First he astounded his parents by his espousal of Jewish orthodoxy. Then he became a Zionist (and his final chapter is a letter to a younger brother, still Zionist and settled in Palestine). His vocation as physician and psychiatrist brought with it a modern faith, half Freudian and half Marxist. Like many analysts he himself required psychoanalytic aid and the first step toward his conversion came through an analyst who revolted against every determinism which denied the fact of the responsibility of the self.

The further steps on his spiritual pilgrimage are related to the horrors which Jewish refugees experienced in Hitler's day. The agents of his conversion were simple Catholic people, mostly serving maids who seemed to him to have a wholeness of character, an inner serenity and an understanding of the relation of suffering and love which he came to feel to be the marks of a "supernatural life." The return to Judaism was attempted but was impossible because he felt too strongly that Judaism

was bound to race and that to embrace it would violate the sense of spiritual kinship he had with those who helped to save him.

His final step is particularly interesting because he is affronted by the chauvinistic Catholicism of Quebec, so bereft of all the spiritual graces which he had learned to identify with Catholicism. The final agents of his conversion are Maritain, Dorothy Day of our "Catholic Worker" and a young French-Canadian doctor, fresh from a peasant home in Quebec. With him he senses a deep spiritual affinity despite the ethnic and historical chasms between them.

These brief indications of the course of a spiritual journey can give no inkling of the spiritual sensitivity, of the urbanity and the soul-searching honesty with which this typical sophisticated modern man arrives at the culmination of conversion. This book is worth many learned treatises on the meaning of faith and love.

R. N.

THE SOCIAL CRISIS OF OUR TIME.

By *Wilhelm Röpke*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1950. 260 pp. \$3.50.

This book, first published in Switzerland in 1942, has immediately attained, by virtue of its brilliant writing and wide education, a representative position in the neo-liberal movement, which is Europe's foremost political reaction to the Fascist period. Neo-liberalism is identified with classical liberalism by the emphasis on an unregulated free market as the guarantee of personal freedom; it is distinguished from classical liberalism by the strategic function which it attributes to the state in not only protecting but shaping the market and the conditions of its smooth functioning. Not that government is best which governs least but that which, if and when necessary, uses strong interventionist measures to keep the cohesive forces of social life and the competitive forces of economic life in proper balance. In other words, the state as the guardian of society, has to prevent the degeneration of "liberalism" to "capitalism," which is, at least in this book,

defined as the first step in collectivism, depersonalizing man by destroying the social fabric and the moral ties between people and thus organizing them for further steps in collectivism.

Two explanatory remarks must here be added. In the first place, in the Switzerland of 1942 everything was overshadowed by the presence of Hitler's armies right across the Rhine, and it is this spectre which the polemic against collectivism is primarily meant to hit; no distinction is made between Fascism and Communism. In the second place, however, as the spectre of Fascism receded into the background and Communism came to the fore, the later books by Röpke and his associates not only refuse to draw a line between Fascism, Socialism and Communism, but also blur the fundamental distinction between liberalism and capitalism and more and more furiously denounce any regulating intervention in the free market as leading to socialism and from there to communism. They are quite impervious to the consideration that, if the minimum of regulation required for a smooth operation of the market is neglected, the reaction can be nothing but a repudiation of liberty altogether and an excess of regulation. That is, they are giving up the peculiar and original position of neo-liberalism and relapse to the time-honored *laissez-faire* doctrine, which ignores the problem of the relationship between society and economy and teaches that the unregulated contest of private interests in the market produces and reproduces both freedom and order.

By way of contrast, the authentic neo-liberal position in its refinement as presented by this book, is strikingly original and plausible, even though beset by very serious problems. It has often been remarked that the taming of the dynamics of industrial competition so as to block big business and monopoly would require intervention of an intensity and a state of a power quite incompatible with liberal principles. And even then it is highly doubtful that economic crises of the unregulated market would be reduced to tol-

erable proportions without requiring some control of investments, as neo-liberalism confidently proclaims. The entire program thus looks fairly utopian in a country where industrial mobility has attained the dimensions which it shows in the United States.

The problem looks far less utopian in Switzerland, however. It may even help us to understand the unique position of that small country and its significance in particular: a country which has built some of the leading industries of the world (locomotives, watches) without any trace of an industrial revolution such as all the other leading industrial countries had to undergo.

Big cities of an industrial proletarian character are strictly unknown in Switzerland and the social connection between industry and small-scale farming has not been disrupted. This achievement of its country is the background of the present book. If the book thereby loses in direct applicability to countries of a less wisely guided past, it does not thereby lose in paradigmatic importance for an age whose principal problem will be the industrialization of huge undeveloped countries and continents without abandoning them to a socially disruptive industrial revolution which could only end in communism.

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